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ABSTRACT

One of a series of four, this report presents the abstract and summary of the technical report of a project which investigated the impact of Head Start parent participation on the program's quality, on institutional changes inthe community, on the Head Start children, and on the Head Start parents themselves. Two types of parent participation were investigated: (1) parents in decision-making roles, and (2) parents in learner roles. Another type of involvement, parents as paid employees in Head Start, was also studied. This report capsulizes the methods of the study, the target population, the results, the implications, and the recommendations for future research. Related documents include PS 006 814, PS 006 816, and PS 006 817. (ST)

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NON-TECHNICAL REPORT

INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF PARENT PARTICIPATION IN HEAD START

Prepared for: Project Head Start
Office of Child Development
United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare

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MIDCO EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATES INC.

P R E F A C E

This report is an abstract and summary of the technical report of a nationwide research project carried out by MIDCO Educational Associates, Inc., Denver, Colorado, under contract HEW-OS-72-45 for the Office of Child Development, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, to study parent participation in Head Start. It is one of three reports submitted to the Office of Child Development and summarizes in non-technical language the entire project, and also identifies programmatic implications which may be relevant to the future of parent participation in Head Start. Another of the reports is devoted to the relevant antecedent literature and firsthand reportage of events which formed the basis of Head Start parent participation. The third report is a technical report that presents in detail the methodology and results of the project.

The purpose of the project was, in the main, to investigate two types of parent participation: (1) parents in decision-making roles, and (2) parents in learner roles. Another type of involvement, parents as paid employees in Head Start, was studied as well. Four areas were investigated in relation to parent involvement. These were: (1) quality of Head Start programs, (2) change in community institutions, (3) Head Start children, and (4) the parents of Head Start children. Both former and current children and parents were subjects of the study.

The project began on November 8, 1971, and was completed within a year of that date. The methodology was planned and executed in close cooperation with the OCD Project Officer, Dr. Thelma Zener, and was reviewed at critical

stages by OCD's review panel for this project. MIDCO also convened review panels at important stages of the project for their advice and recommendations. Many paraprofessional and professional Associates worked in various stages of the project, particularly in connection with the data collection process. Head Start parents, program persons, and professional persons participated in the review panels convened by MIDCO. Rocky Mountain Behavioral Sciences Institute was the subcontractor for data processing and analysis. MIDCO's research staff consisted of the following:

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A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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INTRODUCTION

The involvement of parents has been an integral part of Head Start from its beginning. The so-called "Cooke Memo" (Cooke, 1965) in generating the original Head Start objectives and the original Head Start guidelines (Head Start, 1967), spelled out, explicitly, ways in which parents were to be involved. These included the following: participation in decision-making about the nature and operation of programs; participation in the classroom as paid employees, volunteers or observers; visits with staff in the Head Start family's home; and, participation in educational opportunities developed by Head Start programs. It is clear that a broad spectrum of parent participation activities was intended, ranging from relatively passive involvement and focus on the parents' own Head Start children at the one extreme, through more active learning, observing, and helping activities, to even more active involvement in planning and decision-making at every level of Head Start. The Head Start agency application form (CAP Form 30a) required agencies to describe their plans for attaining the objectives of parent participation on advisory groups, how they planned to involve parents in program operations, and ways in which the parents were to become beneficiaries of the program directly. Thus, Head Start, while usually thought of as a program for preschool children of the poor, is truly a program intended to involve parents both as contributors and beneficiaries.

Prior to the conception of Head Start, several forces were interacting that influenced the direction and development of the nation's first widescale program for preschool children and families.

In the early 1960's a knowledge base to justify a program for preschool children was emerging. Martin Deutsch was having considerable success in his work with "deprived" children. Bloom (1964) discussed the importance of early experiences upon the cognitive growth education achievement of children. Kagan and Moss (1962) pointed out the specific influence of home and maternal factors in the development of young children. Parent participation in Head Start was to a large extent related to these developments. As Hess, Block, Costello, Knowles and Largay (1971) point out:

> A compelling line of argument was developed for parent participation in early education programs. It contended that early experience affects subsequent intellectual and educational growth and achievement, and that children who grow up in homes disadvantaged by racial discrimination and poverty have a deficit of experiences presumably essential for academic achievement in the public schools (p. 266).

The assumptions stated by Hess, et. al., though not necessarily reflective of their own position, became the underpinning for Project Head Start. The arguments for involving parents in the program were largely rehabilitative in nature. Their intent was to assist parents "in providing a more adequate educational environment for their young children (p. 265-266)."

At the same time, however, there was another set of arguments that emanated from a different direction. Although Head Start was conceived primarily as a program for young children, the context in which it developed was that of the Community Action Program (CAP) of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). In the words of the enabling legislation, a community action program was one "which is developed, conducted, and administered with the maximum feasible participation of the residents of the areas and members of the groups served... (Section 202a 3 of S. 2642 and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964)." Thus, a second rationale for parent participation

was a mandate* in the legislation itself, and the phrase "maximum feasible participation" became a byword for this thrust.

In the view of Hess, et al., (1971) the latter was primarily social and political in origin -- as opposed to educational -- although one could argue that most rationales for overcoming the effects of deprivation are social in origin. According to Hess, et al., (1971) it was the impetus of the civil rights movement which preceded, but only barely, the enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act that led to the development.

> One feature of the civil rights movement was bitter and articulate criticism of the public schools, especially in urban areas. Criticisms concentrated upon the lack of relationship between the educational experiences offered by the school and the local community's cultural experiences and needs (p. 266).

There is no doubt that social and political considerations were among the factors that influenced the design of the program, as indeed they influenced the Economic Opportunity Act itself. At the same time, however, there was also a body of experience, knowledge, and a set of assumptions about the causes of deprivation that provided a rationale for this approach. Primarily, this set of assumptions was derived from studies by sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and to some extent economists, who viewed deprivation not so much the result of faulty or inadequate socialization, but the consequence of the way our society was organized, and the fact that our major institutions, among which education was a prime example, were geared mainly to serving the middle class. In this view, the aim of anti-poverty programs was not merely to provide additional services to the poor, but to make sure that the programs and services remained relevant to their aspirations and needs.

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*The complexities of and confusion about this mandate are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of Perspectives on Parent Participation in Project Head Start, one of the accompanying reports for this project.

From this perspective, the purpose of parent participation went far beyond the training or education of parents so they could provide a more adequate educational environment for their young children within the family. Here the emphasis was to give parents, or other residents of poverty areas, a measure of control over the services and programs that were intended for their benefit.

According to Hess, et al., (1971)

> It was not widely recognized at the time that the rationale and points of view that underlay these two influences -- educational and political -- soon would come into conflict. There may be an inherent contradiction between the arguments that have to do with cumulative deficit and those which support ethnic pride and self-determination for ghetto communities (p. 266).

A somewhat similar concern is noted in the Request for Proposal that initiated this project:

> While the value of parent participation in the child's development has long been recognized as a central element in optimum growth, the value of parent participation in decision-making efforts about staffing, budget, curriculum, personnel and other matters relating to program operation has been questioned. We need to examine the Head Start experience for whatever guidance it can offer as to whether the optimism about the value of the role of learner, and the skepticism about the values of the role of decision-maker as these have been realized in current educational practice are justified (p. 3 of the Work Statement).

Although several positive reasons for parent involvement are frequently cited, its efficacy does not go unchallenged. As Hess (1969) has pointed out, the school and the family perform similar functions with regard to child development, and may be regarded as competing agents of socialization. If one assumes that the educational system should have primary responsibility for the development of the child, then it would place the educational system in the role of the "expert," and the parent and family would assume a less important role. The positive effects of parent involvement are by no means universally accepted, either in terms of extent or in terms of type of parent participation involved. The extent and type of involvement one might assume to be optimal would depend on the model of educational disadvantagement adhered

to, as outlined by Hess (1969) and discussed more thoroughly in Perspectives on Parent Participation in Project Head Start, the literature review for this project.

It is out of this uncertainty that the question of the efficacy of parent involvement has arisen. Are the assumptions valid upon which Head Start parent participation is based? The present project has been carried out in an effort to help answer this question.

The purpose of this project has been to investigate the impact of parent participation as decision-makers and as learners--and to a lesser extent, as paid employees -- on Head Start program quality, on institutional change, on the parents themselves, and on their Head Start children. More specifically, the work statement setting forth the task of this project has presented the rationale in the form of assumptions to be examined. First, it has been assumed that parent participation in decision-making roles will be good for program quality, since parents are acutely aware of their own children's needs. Secondly, it has been assumed that parent participation in decision-making roles would help parents to learn how to work within the community structure to achieve their goals, and in so doing gain a greater sense of competence. Third, the increased self-confidence and inner direction gained by parents through participation is believed to have beneficial effects on their children's feelings, attitudes, motives, emotions, and consequently their achievement. Finally, it is believed that such participation would lead to changes in community institutions such that they would become more responsive to the needs of the poor. In addition to parent involvement in decision-making, it has been assumed that involving parents in learner roles may be a means of producing other desirable effects. For one, parents who participate as learners in Head Start programs might acquire skills and

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attitudes which will benefit their children's emotional and cognitive development. Further, the increased feelings of competence and gratification in child rearing resulting from participation in Head Start learner activities may well lead to improved self-concepts and increased effectiveness in general functioning, eventually leading to improvements in Head Start programs and community institutions.

Thus, while there is a philosophical-theoretical basis behind the parent involvement emphasis in Head Start, and numerous assumptions are made about its benefits for the children, the parents, the community, and the Head Start programs themselves, an empirical evaluation of parent participation in Head Start has not been carried out. It is the purpose of this project to evalute the impact of parent participation in the Head Start context.

In summary, then, the objective of the project was to provide evaluative information concerning four of the primary assumptions underlying Head Start programs:

1. Assumption: Parent participation has positive effects on the quality of center programs.
2. Assumption: Parent participation has positive effects on community institutions.
3. Assumption: Parent participation has positive effects on the parents themselves.
4. Assumption: Parent participation has positive effects on their Head Start children.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

Parent participation was studied at two different levels. First, it was studied at the center level. That is, Head Start centers were selected and classified according to the extent to which parents were involved in the Head Start program originating from that center. Second, parent participation was studied at the subject level. ("Subject" refers to a parent or her/his Head Start child studied in the project.) Here parents were selected and classified as to the extent to which they, as parents, were involved in Head Start activities, despite the classification of their center.

Both the centers and the parent-child subject pairs were selected on the basis of two different types of parent participation. One of these was designated as the decision-making role, or decision-making activity, and the other was designated the learner role, or learner activities. In addition, some of the subjects were currently in Head Start during the 1971-1972 year, and some were in Head Start during the 1970-1971 year but these latter had moved on to kindergarten or first grade at the time of this project. These latter subjects (1970-1971) were designated as "former" subjects. Finally, a sample of paid Head Start employees and their Head Start children were studied, when and where they could be obtained at the centers selected, to see if this type of participation was in any way different from the others.

The project was designed in such a way as to yield as much information as possible about parent participation in Head Start in a single data collection effort. Ideally, research would attempt to establish cause-and-effect relationships, but that was not possible in this project. Instead, the project attempted to see what variables were associated with parent participation, and provide the necessary ground work for the future research which will be needed to establish causality.

The following sections describe in greater detail the methods and procedures followed in conducting the project.

CENTER SELECTION

Twenty Head Start centers across the 48 continental United States were selected for study. They were selected in such a way that some would be high and some low in each of the two types of parent participation (decision-making and learning). In order to be as objective as possible, a predetermined procedure for selecting the 20 centers was followed. This involved the following steps:

1. A 10% random sample of all the Head Start grantee agencies was selected by DHEW (approximately 94 agencies);

2. A structured telephone interview was carried out with the Head Start director or the director's representative, of the grantee agency to obtain certain specific information about that agency and its centers;

3. A second set of structured interviews was carried out with the center directors and parent committee chairmen of centers in agencies which appeared, on the basis of the first interviews, to meet certain requirements of the study; and,

4. Based on all the information collected in both sets of interviews, 20 centers which met design requirements were selected for detailed study. Five of the centers were high in terms of the opportunities they offered Head Start parents to participate both as decision-makers and as learners in their centers. These centers were designated HiHi. Five of the centers were relatively low in terms of the opportunities they offered to parents in each of the two roles and they were designated LoLo. Five of the centers were high in offering parents opportunities to participate as decision-makers, but low in providing opportunities as learners and these were designated HiLo.

Five were low in offering opportunities for parents to participate as decision-makers, but high in offering opportunities for parents to participate as learners and these were designated LoHi.

An attempt was made to include, to the extent possible, centers in all geographic areas, centers in both rural and urban locations, centers with different ethnic compositions and centers operated by both delegate and grantee agencies.

The selection of centers on the basis of high vs. low on each of the two kinds of parent participation then permitted comparisons to be made between the parents of the high and low involvement centers in each of the two kinds of parent participation roles, and also permitted similar comparisons to be made of the children, of the program quality, and of institutional changes in the community in which Head Start parents were involved.

SUBJECT SELECTION

At each of the 20 centers approximately 20 to 24 parent-child pairs were selected as subjects in the study. Of these, an attempt was made to have twelve current parents and their Head Start children, eight former parents and their Head Start children, and four paid employees and their Head Start children. The parent most involved with Head Start, usually the mother, was the parent selected as the subject in the study. The current sample consisted of children and their parents currently in Head Start, usually for their first and only year. The former sample consisted of children and their parents who had been in Head Start the preceding year, but who were in kindergarten or first grade at the time of the study.

Within each of the current and former samples, subjects were selected as to the degree of the parent's involvement in each of the two roles under study. Wherever possible, the current subject sample at a center consisted

of the following breakdown: (1) Four parent-child pairs in which the parents were high in participation in both decision-making and learner activities (designated HiHi); (2) Four in which the parents were low in both types of activities (LoLo); (3) Two in which the parents were high in decision-making activities, but low in learner activities (HiLo); and (4) Two in which the parents were low in decision-making, but high in learner activities (LoHi). For the former sample, two parent-child pairs were selected in each of the four categories. The paid employee sample was not selected on the basis of involvement in decision-making or learner activities.

Subjects were selected by Head Start center staff based on predetermined definitions and guidelines provided them. For example, decision-making activities consisted of participation on policy councils, policy committees, and center or classroom committees, as well as less formal decision-making activities. Learner activities included parent participation at the center level as volunteers or observers in the classroom, participation in adult education programs, and home visit contacts with Head Start staff.

Later, when parents were administered the questionnaires, they were asked a series of questions about their participation which permitted a more precise classification in each of the two types of involvement. Data analyses were based on the latter classification information (from the parents), but the original subject selection procedure insured that parents with all types and degrees of involvement were selected.

MEASURES

A number of measures were selected and developed for the intensive study of the parents, their children, the Head Start programs, and community institutional change.

For collecting data about the parents, a battery of self-report measures was put together which took the parent from forty-five minutes to one hour to fill out. These questionnaires and scales were intended to assess the parent's attitudes and feelings, the extent to which they were involved in the community, their self-concepts, and the extent to whcih they had been involved in Head Start in each of the two roles being studied.

To assess the children, several standardized tests were selected to measure cognitive and intellective development, school readiness, self-concept, and social adjustment.

For program quality, a set of specially constructed questionnaires was devised to be filled out by Head Start staff, including the center director, teachers, and aides, and by parent committee chairmen. In addition to these, a set of questions was also directed to the parents concerning program quality. The data collection team leaders also made certain judgments based on their observations of program quality while they were present in each center.

In order to assess community institutional change, a systematic procedure was devised to collect instances of changes which had occurred in community institutions and supporting data. First, a structured group interview was conducted by the data collection team leader with a group of actively involved current and former parents in which they were asked to generate, or recall, as many institutional changes as they could in which Head Start parents were in some way involved. Second, they were asked to select the two most important changes from the list they had generated. Finally, interviews were conducted with people in the community to confirm these changes and see if they were still in effect.

PRETEST

A pretest of the instruments and procedures used in the study was carried out at a Head Start center in the Denver, Colorado area for the purpose of trying out the various instruments and procedures, and for working out the general procedures to be followed at each center. Based on the information collected at the pretest location, a number of changes were made in the test batteries and in the procedures to be followed, and a training program was prepared for the data collectors.

PROCEDURE

Data collection personnel were selected and assembled in Denver for a three day training program. This group included twenty paraprofessional community interviewers, each selected from one of the twenty centers to be studied, plus a number of team leaders. The community interviewers worked under the direction of the team leaders who were professional people with experience in the area of child development, research methods, education, or other relevant [illegible]. During this training program team leaders and community interviewers were trained in all aspects of the data collection procedures to be carried out at each center. This involved detailed training regarding the selection and contacting of subjects, maintaining good relations with Head Start center staff, and the administration of the tests and other instruments.

Following the training program the team went into each of the twenty centers during a two-month period in the spring of 1972 and collected the data. Approximately ten days were spent in each center. Following data collections, the instruments were scored and processed in a number of ways in order to obtain the results and conclusions of the study.

PROJECT RESULTS

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY POPULATION

Before describing the main results of the project, this section presents some interesting and important characteristics of the centers, the parents and the children studied. While the findings presented here cannot be generalized beyond the centers and subjects studied, they help to clarify the main results and may suggest some hypotheses for future research.

Characteristics Related to Center Classification

An analysis of parent groups, as they were classified by centers and parent categories, revealed a number of differences. The parents at centers where decision-making activities were stressed had the highest overall levels of participation, i.e., parents actually participated more on the average. These centers also had the most highly educated fathers.

While parent groups were ethnically similar, the centers classified as high in both decision-making and learning had a somewhat higher proportion of black families. Centers characterized by high parent participation in decision-making but low in learning had a higher proportion of Mexican-American families than the others. There were no differences in any other parent participation characteristics, however, that appeared to be related to ethnicity.

Parents in centers high in both types of parent participation had the smallest number of older children previously enrolled in Head Start. Centers high in decision-making but low in learning had parents with the most previously enrolled children, and as such, had children in Head Start for the longest period of time. It may be that this latter group represents a high-participation parent population in which the need for learning activities was lessened as they gained increasing experiences as Head Start parents.

The parents that appear to be most distinctly different are those at the centers characterized by low levels of parent participation in both decision-making and learning. They tended to be more rural, the families had lower incomes, and they had, on the average, resided longer in the community. The children at such centers were older than the children enrolled at other centers, and, of course, their actual participation in Head Start activities was lower than in any other group.

Characteristics Related to Parent Classification

As far as basic characteristics of the parents were concerned, there were no differences that could be attributed to the type of parent participation. That is, whether an involved parent was participating as a decision-maker or as a learner was not related to other characteristics, such as age, level of education, length of residence in the community, etc.

There were, however, some differences that appear to distinguish parents according to the extent of involvement. Parents who were highly involved appear to be different in several ways from parents who did not participate in Head Start programs. The most striking differences were that parents who participated in both decision-making and learning roles had more years of education, fewer children living in the home, and the children that they had in Head Start were younger. Conversely, non-participating parents were found to have the least education, the largest total number of living children, and their enrolled children were older.

Parent and Center Relationships

Certain characteristics of parents and certain characteristics of centers tended to be found together. For example, high participation parents had the youngest children, and centers where high levels of participation were

encouraged had the youngest child population. Parents who were highly involved in both roles (HiHi) and who were also at centers that encourage high levels of parent participation in both roles (HiHi) had the youngest children even in comparison to other high-participation parent groups. Since the parent groups did not differ in terms of age, it seems likely that parents who are interested in community involvement may tend to enroll their children earlier and that this tendency becomes especially apparent in centers where parent activities are encouraged.

The degrees to which centers involved parents may be a direct response to the character and the expressed needs of the parent population. A center may not be able to really promote high involvement if its parents refuse any participant role. On the other hand, when confronted by active, interested, and participation-oriented parents, a center may have little choice but to provide the opportunity for such participation.

This speculation is to some extent reinforced by the fact that people participate in other community activities to approximately the same extent that they participate in Head Start programs. That is, in this project it was found that parents who participated in Head Start programs were likely to participate to a greater extent in other community activities as well. A high-participant "type" of parent is one who is generally involved in socially approved programs. Head Start activities are likely to be one of several involvements. Interestingly, the higher the mother's level of education the more likely she is to be involved in the community, and to feel integrated into the social structure of the community.

Whatever the causes, a study of the basic characteristics of parent groups makes it clear that there were substantial differences between different sub-groups of Head Start parents and their children, and these

differences are related both to levels of participation in learning and decision-making activities and to the emphases placed on parent participation in centers.

IMPACT ON PARENTS

Parent Participation in Head Start and Parent Attitudes

A major part of the questionnaires filled out by parents of Head Start children dealt with their attitudes and feelings. Three broad areas were covered: (1) General satisfaction with life; (2) Alienation and internal-external locus of control; and (3) Attitudes toward education. Differences between parents in different center classifications and between parents with different extents and types of parent participation have been analyzed. The first section below discusses differences between parents at centers high in participation as compared with centers that are low.* The next section considers differences between parents who are high or low in involvement, despite the classification of the center they are in. Each of these sections will deal with the three broad areas mentioned above.

Parent Attitudes and Center Classification

(1). General Satisfaction with Life

There is no direct, objective way of assessing quality of life. The best measures are the indirect reflections of quality of living revealed through the feelings and attitudes of the individuals involved. A wide variety of different measures were used to evaluate the general happiness, satisfaction, and feelings of competence of Head Start parents. These ranged

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*It should be pointed out that the design of the study was such that differences between parents from the different center classifications would be minimized. The sample of parents from each center was selected to include equal numbers of parents in both types and extents of participation. Thus, differences observed in parents from different centers are appearing despite the fact that similar catagories of parents were selected for study in each center.

from simple questions asking how satisfied and happy they felt, to questions where the parents rated not only how they felt Now, in the present, but how they felt Then, or a couple of years in the past, and how they expected things to be in the Future.

There were no differences observed between parents as a group from the different centers in how satisfied or happy they felt on any of these measures. On the average, Head Start parents scored slightly above "pretty satisfied" on the general questions. The majority also indicated that they felt things were better now than in the past, and well over three-fourths of them said they expected things to be better for them in the future.

(2). Alienation and Locus of Control

Theoretically, feelings of alienation are also related to general satisfaction, but are more deeply rooted. The two scales used in this study were designed to identify a sense of isolation from other people. One evaluated general alienation, and the other aimed at work and social alienation.

Among current parents in Head Start, there was less alienation in those centers where parents were highly involved in decision-making. Former parents did not show the same differences.

Locus of control is a measure of the extent to which a person feels he is master of his own circumstances, as opposed to being a victim of fate. One of the two scales used was job-oriented. The other scale was a more general measure of locus of control. It has been widely assumed that parent participation, particularly as decision-makers, could make the parents feel that they have greater control over what happens to them. Consistant with this assumption, it was found that parents in the centers that were lowest in parent involvement felt they had somewhat less control

over their lives, as shown by a difference on the general locus of control scale.

(3). Attitudes Toward Education

One effect of Head Start involvement should be to sensitize parents to the educational needs of their children and to their own "education-facilitator" roles as parents. There were no differences observed between the different center classifications in parents' attitudes toward education, but parents in the centers with the lowest parent involvement felt less able to influence the schools or the education of their children.

Parents' Attitudes and Extent of Parent Participation

To determine the relationship between parent attitudes and extent of involvement, parents who were highly involved (above the median) in both learner and decision-making roles were compared with parents who were not involved in either role, no matter how their center was classified.

(1). General Satisfaction with Life

There were differences in life satisfaction between parents who had a high extent of involvement in Head Start and those with almost no involvement. One of the scales used measured the parents' feelings about how successful and skilled they were. The parents who were highly involved saw themselves as more successful a few years ago than those who were not involved, and they also saw themselves as more successful now. These parents also rated themselves as about the same in happiness a few years ago, as low involvement parents, but as happier and more satisfied now. While the two groups were not different on some of the items, the ones they differed on were all in the same direction. In general, highly involved parents felt more successful all along. This might be because they were slightly better educated, and perhaps a little better off in other ways, than the parents who were not

involved. But they reported that their general life satisfaction had increased more than that of low involvement parents, and this reported increase had taken place during the period they and their children were involved with Head Start.

(2). Alienation and Locus of Control

The locus of control scales, which measure the amount of control parents feel they have over their own lives, were not different for high and low involvement parents. The parents were different, however, on the alienation scales. The parents of children currently in Head Start who were highly involved had more positive attitudes on both of the alienation scales.

(3). Attitudes Toward Education

There were no differences between high and low involvement parents in the scales used to measure the value they placed on education, they way they felt about their ability to influence education, or their own ability to help their children.

Summary: Attitudes of Parents and Head Start Participation

The major difference between parents from different types of centers was in the feelings they had about their ability to influence and control things. In centers where parents were not highly involved in Head Start, parents felt less able to influence their school systems and less in control of things generally. These feelings were probably related to actual events occurring in their communities and in Head Start. Consistent with this, the section of this report on institutional change shows that in centers where parent participation was low, the parents did not have as much influence on the institutions in their communities.

Whether the difference in feelings of control grew from the fact that parents were involved in Head Start, or whether something else led to both

the parent involvement in Head Start and the feelings of control at high involvement centers, cannot be determined at this time. It may be that the overall atmosphere of the community led to both. In that case, the Head Start involvement of parents would undoubtedly be a part of this atmosphere and would help to support it, even if it did not help create it.

The parents who were highly involved in Head Start saw themselves as more successful and skilled than those not involved. This is probably not an effect of Head Start involvement, since they also stated that they had felt that way before their children entered the program. They were a little better educated and the section of this report on community involvement also shows that they were more active in the community before their children entered Head Start. Clearly, the parents who became highly involved were different from low involvement parents to begin with.

The highly involved parents who were currently active also felt that they were a little more socially involved and less isolated. This feeling could be simply a reflection of their social activity in Head Start. There is some evidence that the feelings may disappear when they are no longer so actively involved in Head Start.

The changes reported by parents in general satisfaction may have occurred because parents who are more involved in the community tend to become more satisfied with things in general, but the increased satisfaction could also be one of the benefits of intense involvement in Head Start. After talking with many parents, and seeing how much Head Start means to them, it seems quite likely that the greater satisfaction is at least partly attributable to their Head Start involvement.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

One of the ancillary goals of parent involvement in Head Start is to increase parents' involvement not only in the education of their children,

but also in their community. Two measures of community involvement were developed. One asked parents specifically about their involvement in church groups, politics, education, social groups, etc. They were asked both what they were doing at the time of the study, and what they were doing a couple of years before, so that changes in community involvement that were related to Head Start involvement could be assessed. A second set of ratings asked how parents felt about participation in the community, their influence in the community, and how well they were accepted by the community.

Community Involvement and Center Classification

The results indicate that when children enter Head Start, their parents' other activities in the community do not change much, unless they are in a center where parent involvement is very high in both learner and decision-making roles (HiHi centers). Then their other activities may actually decrease somewhat. In HiHi centers there were many parents highly involved in the Head Start program, and it is possible that these parents simply became more active in Head Start and let some other things go temporarily. After their children leave Head Start, the results suggest that parents tend to become more active in the community than they were when they had children in Head Start.

In those centers where parents were active in decision-making, the parents, on the average, felt more involved in the community, and their feelings of involvement continued to increase even after their children were out of Head Start. In centers where there was low parent involvement in decision-making, the parents' feelings of being involved did not change much.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND EXTENT OF PARENT PARTICIPATION

The changes that took place in community involvement can be seen more easily if they are graphed. Figures 1 and 2 show what probably happens over

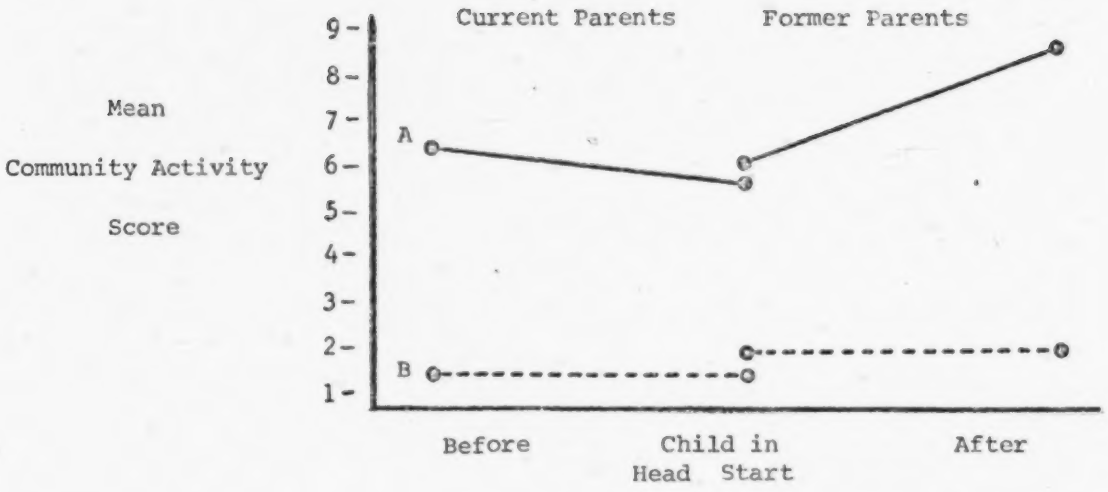

FIG. 1. Community activities outside of Head Start for current and former and high and low involvement parents. (A = High Head Start involvement; B = Low Head Start involvement)

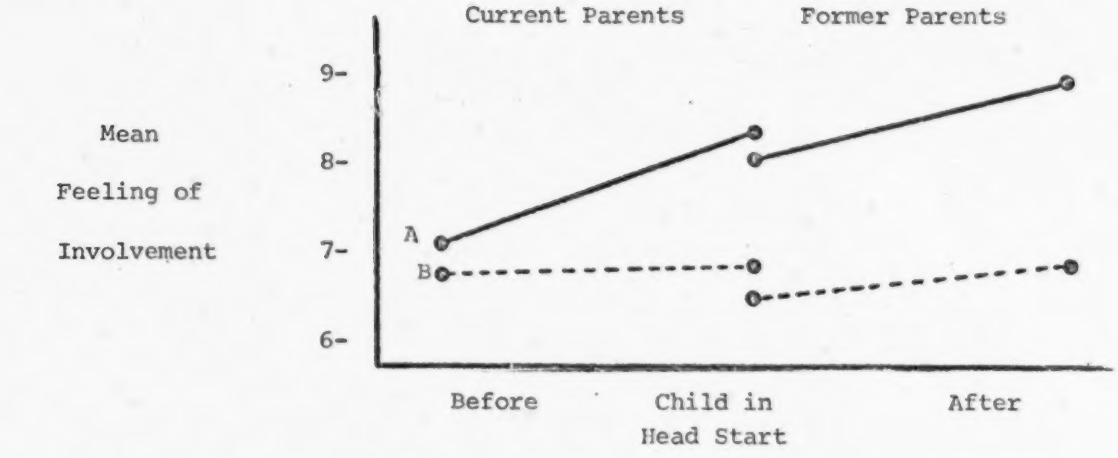

FIG. 2. Feelings about community involvement for current and former and high and low involvement parents. (A = High Head Start involvement; B = Low Head Start involvement)

time. Parents who had low participation in Head Start also had very little involvement in other community activities, and felt less involved in the community. Neither their community activities nor their feelings of being involved changed as a result of their children being in Head Start.

Parents with high participation in Head Start were very different. The current parents, those who had children in Head Start, at the time of the study, indicated that they had considerable community involvement in the past. This suggests strongly that Head Start did not create the involvement of these parents, but that they were already active and their Head Start participation was only another way of being active in the community. When their children entered Head Start and they became involved in it, their other activities may have dropped off very slightly. This may very well be a result of how busy they were with Head Start activities. Their feelings of overall community involvement increased.

Former parents who were high in parent participation said that, in the past, when their participation in Head Start was high, they had about the same level of outside activities in the community as parents whose children were currently in Head Start. When their children left Head Sart they increased their other activities again and their feeling of being involved in the community increased even more.

SUMMARY: PARENT PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The overall pattern of results is very encouraging. Head Start does not appear to have much influence on the community involvement of those parents who do not get actively involved in Head Start, but it may have considerable influence on parents who participate to a great extent. These parents were already highly involved in the community, but their participation in Head Start, while it temporarily may have cut down on their other activities, gave them at the same time an increased feeling of being involved.

Once their children were out of Head Start, and their own Head Start activities were reduced, they returned to their other community activities and probably increased them, and their feelings of being involved increased further.

These changes could, on the other hand, be merely a matter of passage of time. Parents who tend to be active in their communities might show a gradually increasing community involvement over time whether or not they became active in Head Start. But there is also a possibility that Head Start provided them with an opportunity to be involved, and that the parent participation program was a catalyst for these parents, leading to increased community activity and total involvement.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND SELF-CONCEPT OF MOTHERS

In the test that was selected for measuring self-concept the parents first rate themselves (self rating), then rate how they would like to be (goal rating), and then rate how they think others see them (other rating) on each of several dimensions. For example, one of the 15 items or dimensions is "Like to be with people" - - - "Like to be alone." The subject places a check in one of nine boxes between these two extremes indicating his self rating, goal rating, and other rating. Scoring is complex and is based on the differences between these ratings. One of the measures on the test indicates whether the person doing the rating really understood the test and marked it properly. There were quite a few tests that were not marked properly, or which had items left blank, so these were excluded before the analyses were carried out.

Prior research has shown that there are important differences in this test between men and women. There were too few men in the sample to analyze, so these were also eliminated before the results were obtained. This left 250 profiles of Head Start mothers.

The results suggest that some former mothers had feelings of being looked down on by other people, and that as a result, they might tend to be suspicious and less able to form meaningful relationships. Mothers with children currently in Head Start didn't indicate such feelings. These former mothers were either in centers where parents were not highly involved in decision-making or they were not personally involved in Head Start. This finding is somewhat isolated and needs further confirmation. However, finding the difference only in former mothers suggests that it may be an important difference. The implications could be very serious.

The section of this report on community involvement indicates that parents with high involvement in Head Start were also involved in the community in other ways, and that they continued that involvement after their children left Head Start. These parents continued to feel accepted. The fact that they tended to return to their other community activities and feel even more involved in the community after Head Start may help explain why. On the other hand, if they had not been involved in the community or in Head Start, they seemed to feel accepted during the time they actually had children in Head Start. When the children have left Head Start, some parents report feeling rejected by others. This may just be a coincidence. The parents were getting older, and the types of parents who were not involved may have begun to develop feelings of rejection with time any way. But it is also possible that their child's attending Head Start helped make them feel part of the community. When that ended, they may have sensed a change in their involvement with others in the community and may have begun to feel that others were looking down on them. If this were to continue it could be a serious problem both for these parents and their children.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AS PAID EMPLOYEES

The paid employees scored very high on the measures of parent involvement in both learner and decision-making roles. In fact, the average scores were so similar to those of highly involved parents that a detailed examination of the learner and decision-making classifications was made for the paid employees. Of the 55 paid employees sampled, all but 10 were classified above the median of the non-employee parents on both the learner role and decision-making role. The paid employee sample, in terms of parent involvement, was very much like the group of parents classified as having high involvement in both the learner and decision-making roles. To find out whether being paid and highly involved had different effects than being involved without pay, these two groups were compared.

The paid employees studied were somewhat different in basic characteristics. They averaged 3 1/2 years older, their employment stability was considerably higher, and they had been in the community about five years longer. It is possible that Head Start programs tend to select slightly older and more stable residents as employees, although the employment stability could also be a direct result of employment by Head Start. The only other differences between highly involved parents and paid employees were in birth order of the child who was in Head Start, and, in having had children in Head Start over a longer period. Both of these are probably related to the parents' age, and may also indicate that paid employees have been selected from those involved in Head Start longer.

Aside from these background characteristics, there were no differences between paid employees and other parents highly involved in both learner and decision-making roles. Being a paid employee is one way of being involved; being a volunteer, highly involved parent is another. Both appear to have effects on the parents, but it is the high level of involvement that seems to be critical, not the fact of being paid.

IMPACT ON CHILDREN

As mentioned earlier, one part of this project was to study the impact on Head Start children related to having their parents participate in the program along with the child. A number of scales were used to gather data related to this task. Analysis of child measures included comparisons of differences based on: (1) Center classification, (2) Extent of parent participation, (3) Type of parent participation, and (4) Paid employee status. Current-former differences were also included in each analysis to help in the interpretation of results.

DIFFERENCES RELATED TO CENTER CLASSIFICATION

Differences occurred between the children of different center classifications on verbal intelligence, motor-inhibition tasks, self-concept, self-social constructs, behavior ratings in the classroom, behavior ratings in the home, learning-activity, and emotional status. The great majority of results indicate that centers with high levels of participation in one or both parent roles in Head Start generally had better or more desirable results on the child measures than those with low participation.

There were some significant differences between the centers on demographic variables that may have a direct bearing on the interpretation of child measures. An important difference was that the children selected for the sample from the low decision-making and learner centers were approximately six months older, on the average, than the children from the other centers (HiHi = 66.56 months; HiLo - 66.20 months; LoHi = 68.10 months; and LoLo = 72.91 months). This makes findings of differences which favor participation in one or both roles versus minimal participation in both roles even more significant because many of the differences found should favor the LoLo centers children simply because they are older. That differences occurred

favoring high parent participation despite age differences, which might have been expected to neutralize the center classification effects, suggests that the relationship between parent participation center classification and outcomes on the child measures may be quite strong.

Another factor important to the interpretation of center classification results is the extent of individual parent participation within the center classifications. For example, there were nearly 50% more HiHi parents in HiHi centers than there were in the LoLo centers. Results to be discussed in the next section indicate that extent of parent participation was also related to child measures. Center classification differences could thus be representing different extents of parent participation within the centers as well as specific center characteristics (e.g., money spent on parent activities, staff attitude toward parents, etc.). It is difficult to separate these two types of variables which are associated with center classification and thus, with performance on the various measures by the children. So, this study shows that the level of parent involvement in decision-making and learner roles that characterizes a center is clearly associated with those factors that have a position effect on Head Start children. It does not specify whether those outcomes are associated with characteristics of the centers or with the individual parents who participate at those centers.

DIFFERENCES RELATED TO EXTENT OF PARENT PARTICIPATION

A number of differences in the child measures were related to extent of parent participation. Those children whose parents were highly involved in both decision-making and learner activities did better than the children of parents who were minimally involved in both roles on verbal intelligence, academic achievement, self-concept, behavior ratings in the classroom and behavior ratings in the home.

Some of the demographic differences between these two groups of children may be relevant to interpretation of the results. High involvement parents, both fathers and mothers, had more education (about two years). As such, they might value education more highly and provide the kind of environment which promotes performance.

There were also age differences between the two groups. Children of high involvement parents were approximately 3 months younger, making their superior performance on the measures more significant. Also, the intelligence differences between the two groups may account for differences on some of the other measures where intelligence helps, even though the measure is not intended as a measure of intelligence. For example, the children of high involvement parents may receive higher ratings on task orientation because they are more capable of understanding a task and consequently become more involved with it.

The alternative variables that have been described probably do not account entirely for the differences. The extent of parents' participation in decision-making and learner roles is very likely related to performance of their children on the child measures. The results suggest that the extent of parent participation should be considered in accounting for the benefits derived by the children from the Head Start experience.

DIFFERENCES RELATED TO TYPES OF PARENT PARTICIPATION

There were only three significant differences between the children of high learners and the children of high decision-makers. One, a single item on the Brown IDS scale, is probably due to chance. Two, which favor high decision-makers, are probably part of the "higher education, greater community involvement" complex of variables and not particularly significant as an effect of parent participation.

Therefore, type of parent participation does not have a large and pervasive impact on children. The extent of parent activities seems far more important for children than the learner or decision-maker nature of those parent activities.

DIFFERENCES RELATED TO PAID EMPLOYEES

The differences related to being a paid employee were minimal. The only significant result that occurred had little meaning in terms of real differences between high decision-making and learner parents who were also paid employees of Head Start and regular high decision-making and learner parents. The most significant finding with regard to the paid employee role is that these parents, with few exceptions, were in the high decision-making and high learner category. The fact of also being a paid employee contributed little or nothing to differences on child measures.

IMPACT ON PROGRAM QUALITY

In order to assess program quality, two difficult questions had to be considered. What criteria should be used to judge program quality? Whose perception of whether a program meets these criteria should be used?

The first question, that of identifying valid criteria, does not have a straightforward answer. Obviously, the best indicators of quality would be those aspects of Head Start programs which have a demonstrably lasting and positive effect on disadvantaged children. Unfortunately such definitive indicators do not exist and evaluation of program quality must rely on the judgments of knowledgeable persons involved in Head Start. Therefore, with the assistance of the Head Start guidelines and previously used monitoring questionnaires; the judgment of Head Start parents, teachers, administrators; and, MIDCO's panel of child development and measurement specialists, a series of questionnaires was developed which could be used to rate the quality of Head Start programs.

The second question, that of who should be asked to rate the centers on these questionnaires, is also a difficult one. After finally deciding that multiple viewpoints would be necessary, information and judgments were obtained at each center from various center staff members, parents and outside observers. Teachers, teacher aides, center directors, and center committee chairmen were asked questions about recuriting, psychological services, health services, nutrition, volunteer services, career development, and classroom curriculum. In addition, parents were asked how they felt about the value of the program, the quality of the staff, and how their children liked Head Start. Team leaders also spent time looking at the physical facilities and nutrition program, and observed the classroom in operation to rate teacher/child interactions and the childrens' behavior.

While the ratings given by each of these types of raters -- teachers, teacher aides, center directors, parent committee chairmen, parents and outside observers -- on the various aspects of program quality are present in the technical report by MIDCO, Investigation of the Effects of Parent Participation in Head Start, a synthesis of these evaluations will be presented here.

The most consistent and comprehensive finding was that centers which were high in parent involvement in both learner and decision-making roles (i.e., HiHi centers) were also high in nearly all other areas of program quality. They were rated higher than the centers in the other three categories of parent participation in every program component except health services: the health component was rated quite high in all four categories of centers. It is difficult to infer, however, that this high program quality is caused by the great extent of parent participation in the center for it was observed that all areas of program quality were positively related. With some exceptions, when quality was high in one area, it was likely to be high in others. It should be noted that parent participation is actually only one of the many characteristics of program quality that are major objectives for Head Start programs. The HiHi programs were apparently high quality programs generally, and the fact that they were also high in quality of parent participation is not surprising. The parent participation itself may be a reflection of the ability of the administration and staff of these centers to build quality programs in every area. Parent participation may be simply the result of an overall high quality program and not a factor in causing that program to have high quality.

The biggest and only statistically significant variation among the four categories was observed in the ratings made by the teachers and teacher aides

at each center. Those at LoHi and HiLo centers (i.e., the centers where parents were highly involved in either learner or decision-making roles, but not in both) tended to rate their centers poorer than did raters at HiHi and LoLo centers (i.e., the centers where parents were either highly involved in both roles or not involved at all). The centers where parents were involved as learners and not as decision-makers tended to be rated the poorest of all (i.e., LoHi). The difference among the four types of centers was not reported in the individual ratings of center directors and committee chairmen. Those of these raters at HiHi centers tended to rate their centers high; ratings from the other three types of centers tended to be nearly the same. In addition, this statistically significant variation was not observed in the ratings of the field observers who rated the HiHi centers as best and the LoLo centers as poorest.

Since the lower ratings of the programs in LoHi and HiLo centers were not observed in the ratings by center directors, committee chairmen, or field observers, the variation observed in the teacher and teacher aide ratings may well be a variation in the perceptions of quality and not in quality itself. An explanation might be that these HiLo centers were probably striving for strong parent programs in both roles but failing to achieve involvement in one of the roles. The teachers and teacher aides, sensing this failure, might be particularly critical of their program when asked to evaluate it in the context of a study of parent participation. The staff at the LoLo centers, on the other hand, may be less aware of the goals of the parent program and, thus, their perceptions might be less affected by the context of the study.

Given the ambiguity in the ratings of the LoLo, HiLo and LoHi centers, it is not easy to attribute variation in program quality to either type or extent of parent involvement. However, the ratings do conclusively indicate that centers with strong parent programs in both learner and decision-making functions have higher quality programs in the other components of Head Start as well.

IMPACT ON INSTITUTIONS

TOTAL CHANGES REPORTED BY PARENTS

Meetings were held at each of the 20 selected Head Start centers where parents were asked to identify and list all of the institutional changes which had occurred in their community as a result of parent involvement in Head Start. A total of 249 changes were reported by the 173 parents who attended the meetings. The reported institutional changes were first screened so that those not involving Head Start parents were eliminated. The remaining 132 changes were then classified as follows:

TYPE I: Increased involvement of the poor with institutions;

TYPE II: Increased institutional employment of the poor;

TYPE III: Greater educational emphasis on the needs of the poor;

TYPE IV: Modification of health institutions;

TYPE V: Fund-raising and changes in Head Start.

The number of reported changes was significantly greater in centers where parents were highly involved in decision-making and learning activities. In general, the greater the involvement of parents, the more institutional changes reported. The largest difference was between the centers with involvement of some kind--either learning, decision-making or both; and the centers with low parent involvement. More than four times the number of changes were reported in each of the three center groups where parents were involved, in comparison to changes reported in the center group with low involvement.

Analysis of the changes reported at the five centers having high parent participation in both decision-making and learning roles indicated that 42 of the 53 changes were in the categories of increased involvement of the parents with institutions and greater educational emphasis on the particular needs of the parents. Where parents were not actively involved in Head Start, institutional changes reported by parents appeared to be minimal. The few changes reported by

centers having low parent participation indicated primarily increased involvement of parents with institutions.

TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

The parents were also asked to select the two most significant changes which occurred in their community as a result of parent involvement in Head Start. Each of the changes selected by parents as important was evaluated by two criteria. First, was it an actual institutional change; and second, how important was that change to low income families? The following two examples illustrate how these judgments were made.

--An Important Change but not an Institutional Change. A Head Start center was in need of equipment and supplies, so the parents organized a massive fund-raising campaign for the center's improvement. Through rummage and bake sales and canvassing for donations the parents were successful in raising two thousand dollars over one and one-half years. The funds were primarily used to purchase craft supplies and playground and audio-visual equipment for the center.

--An Important Institutional Change. Head Start parents organized over 500 community residents to sign petitions and write letters to put political pressure on state representatives to maintain funding for a day care center that was to be closed due to lack of funds. These funds were forthcoming and the day care center remained open. Since interest and involvement by the parents and other residents continued, the day care center was expanded and became a community center for low income and migrant families. It provided infant and old age facilities, a library and literacy classes, emergency food and clothing supplies, a rescue mission, and a community social worker. The center had become the hub of continued institutional intervention and change with new plans including such action as migrant labor reform.

Six judges who had experience with Head Start were asked to rank brief descripitons of 33 changes by order of importance, as changes from "least important" to "most important." The 33 changes included 19 institutional changes, nine important but not institutional changes, and five changes judged as not being sufficiently important to warrant inclusion as an important change or institutional change.

There was a statistically significant difference between the four center classifications with respect to the importance of the institutional changes. Centers classified as providing high opportunities for involvement in both roles were judged to have reported the most important institutional changes. Centers classified as high in opportunities for decision-making and low in opportunity for learning activities were judged to have reported the next most important changes. Centers having low parent involvement in decision-making and high involvement in learning activities had the third most important changes. Centers classified as having low parent involvement in both roles reported the least important changes. The same results were obtained when four naive judges with no Head Start experience ranked the importance of the changes.

THE ROLE OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE STAGES OF INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

There were six stages of change in which parents could have been involved. The first stage involved how parents learned of the need for the change. There were minor differences, with parents learning about the need from other parents in about half of the changes reported. There was a slight indication that where parents were not involved in decision-making roles, they were a little less likely to have indicated the need for the change.

The second stage related to who urged the parents to take an interest in the change. In the HiHi centers parents took the initiative in involving other parents in seven of the ten changes. This did not occur at all in the

LoLo centers and very little in each of the other types of centers. The high level of involvement of parents in the HiHi centers seems to have led to increased interest in change and involvement by other parents. This may have resulted from the greater opportunities for communication among parents in the HiHi centers.

The third stage pertained to the source of suggested solutions. Parent involvement was related to the source of solutions. In the LoLo centers, three of the four solutions were suggested by professional staff. In the other three groups of centers, parents were more likely to have suggested the change. Where they did not do so individually, they were likely to be involved through the center committees or policy councils, which were often instrumental in suggesting changes. Development and presentation of ideas for solutions by parents were highest in the HiHi centers.

The fourth stage involved provisions of support for the parents invovled in trying to institute the change. There was some evidence that parents in HiHi centers were more independent and received less outside support involving professional staff time. Parents in HiHi centers reported four cases in which support came only from other parents; something which did not occur in any of the other centers. In the other centers where parents were involved, support was generally provided by professional or other community groups.

The fifth stage is concerned with what brought about the changes and how many parents were actually involved. The HiHi centers once again showed a high degree of parent independence. Changes there were likely to occur through the initiative of parents and to involve large numbers of parents. In the HiLo centers, where parents were involved in decision-making, they were also involved in bringing about some of the changes, although most of the changes were handled at administrative levels. In centers where parents were low in decision-making, they were almost never directly involved in bringing about the change.

The sixth stage involved putting the changes into effect once the plans for the change had been agreed upon. The most frequent causes of delays were due to funding and problems associated with administrative procedures. Parents continued to press for continued changes in the two center groups which had high parent participation in decision-making.

High parent participation in both roles was reflected in involvement of parents at all of the stages of institutional change. Where parents were highly involved in either role they were likely to play an important part in initiating the ideas for change, and in suggesting solutions to problems. Parents were a little more likely to be influential, and much more likely to press for further improvement, if their center involved them in decision-making roles rather than learner roles. When parents were highly involved in both roles, their function in institutional change appears likely to have been far greater than when parents were highly involved in only one of the two roles or not involved in either role.

PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTS OF CHANGES

The responses by parents to a questionnaire concerning the effects of the two most significant changes selected by parents from their community were categorized by type of response and center group. Each parent who attended the meeting on institutional changes was asked to respond to several questions which included the effects of each change on parents, their children, neighborhood and community institutions.

The dominant theme running through parent responses concerning the effects of the significant changes was one of significant personal benefit and increased awareness and understanding of many things affecting the parents themselves, their families, and community institutions. Many parents indicated that they had acquired a better understanding of themselves, felt more independent, and had gained a sense of purpose. Parents in the HiHi centers

reported several areas of personal benefits as a result of the changes. Some were able to obtain employment or further education. They also felt that they learned more about their communities and gained increased understanding of the importance of other people's ideas and opinions. In the political area, parents reported an increased understanding of the goals and operation of Head Start, a new awareness of the effects of legislation on Head Start, and direct experience with the function of leadership.

Parents in the three center groups having high parent involvement in one or both roles reported a greater understanding of the needs of children, including health needs, and an increased ability to raise children more effectively, than parents in centers having low participation in both roles. There were very few comments from parents in the LoLo centers. In commenting on the effects of the changes on their children, parents stressed the improvement of learning experiences and opportunities and expressed a belief that their children were learning more as a result of the changes. Parents also perceived several effects in the area of social relationships. Children were felt to be getting along better with other children, learning to respect each other's property and to understand better each other's culture. In centers where the significant changes involved health institutions, parents frequently expressed relief and appreciation for the much better health enjoyed by their children. They were grateful for elimination of the discouragement and pressure of trying to pay for all of the medical services they had received through Head Start. In many instances, parents reported a marked improvement in their children's health and disposition as a result of some of the changes. Neighborhood changes reported by parents to be a result of the changes included an increased interest in Head Start, improved medical services, increased pride in the neighborhood, safer neighborhoods and increased social interactions and friendships. A few parents reported an increased awareness of the needs of the neighborhood and of the importance of communication, cooperation, and the sharing of ideas.

The effects of the changes on community institutions included increased community interest and awareness of the needs of low income families, additional funding and financial support, increased use of agencies and services, and increased parent involvement in community organizations other than Head Start. Parents reported that the effects of the institutional changes and other important changes were beneficial in many ways.

PERMANENCE OF THE TWO SELECTED CHANGES

Parents at the center meeting discussed three additional questions concerning the two selected changes. Had there actually been a change? Was the change still in effect? How did the parents feel about the change?

The answer to the first question was affirmative at the sites where a total of 33 changes had been reported. The answer to the second question, about the permanence of the change, was affirmative for 32 of the 33 reported changes. The remaining change, reported at a center in the LoLo center group, was still in effect, but future continuation of the change was uncertain. Similarly, in answer to the third question, parents were described as feeling "positive," "better," "pleased," or "enthusiastic" about 25 of the changes, feeling "that the change would expand" with respect to two changes, feeling "continued concern" about one change, and "important" about one other change. One of the remaining changes at a center in the LoLo center group was a change about which the parents did not care. There was no information concerning how parents felt about the other change which was reported at a center in the LoHi center group.

PARTICIPATION SCORES OF PARENTS REPORTING ON INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

The average parent participation scores for parents attending the meetings were substantially higher than the average scores of other parents included in

the study. These data may be interpreted as indicating that most of the parents who reported on institutional change had extensive experience in their Head Start programs, and had the kind of experience that would make them knowledgeable about institutional changes and parent involvement in those changes.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

There appears to be a pattern which indicates that the number and importance of institutional changes were related to the extent and type of parent involvement in the context of Head Start programs. Where parents had minimal involvement or were not involved in either learner or decision-making roles, few changes were reported.

Where parent participation was evident (e.g., HiHi, HiLo, and LoHi centers) institutional changes were readily apparent and could be documented by parents and institutional representatives. The significance and importance of the changes appeared to be greater where parents were involved in decision-making roles rather than learner roles. However, the largest number of changes and the most important changes appeared to occur in those centers where a majority of the parents were highly involved in both learning and decision-making activities.

Some of the changes reported by parents were perceived as being significant by the parents, but were not institutional changes. Parents involved in decision-making roles appeared to be more able to identify and describe institutional changes which had a significant and lasting impact.

Extensive parent participation in Head Start centers appeared to be related to involvement of parents at all stages of institutional change. When parents were involved in either role or in both roles, they were more likely to initiate the ideas for change and to suggest solutions to problems than where there was little or no parent involvement. It appears that parents

were more likely to be influential in initiating changes, finding solutions to problems, and pressing for further changes if they were in centers which involved them in decision-making activities rather than learner activities.

When parents were highly involved in both roles their function in institutional change at all stages appeared likely to be far greater than if there were no involvement or involvement in only one of the two roles.

Support for this conclusion was based on the information which indicated that parents were more likely to take the initiative involving other parents, to function with greater independence, and to need less support from professional staff in initiating and bringing about changes. Furthermore, parents in HiHi centers appeared more likely to produce solutions directly instead of through committees, to involve larger numbers of parents, and were more likely to press for further improvements and changes than parents in the other two center groups which involved parents (HiLo and LoHi).

Parents reported many beneficial effects resulting from the changes. These benefits were evident in terms of effects on parents, their children, neighborhood, Head Start, and community institutions. Permanence of the changes was readily apparent and parents voiced a uniformly positive response to approximately two-thirds of the changes.

Significant and critical institutional changes appeared to result from a combination of factors. The ideal combination appeared to be parents who were interested in the welfare of their families, Head Start staffs who provided opportunities for parent involvement in both roles plus continued support and encouragement, community leaders who were responsive to the needs of low income families, and federal and state policies and funding which provided a support base and climate conducive to bringing about change for the benefit of low income families. Failure to provide one or more of the four factors appeared to curtail the extent and effectiveness of institutional change.

C O N C L U S I O N S

What can be concluded about the impact of parent participation in Head Start programs from this study?

The reader is reminded that the study is a post hoc effort. While it does identify a number of important relationships between parent participation and valuable outcomes for children, parents and Head Start communities, the temptation to carry these relationships into definitive statements or conclusions about effects which can be produced by improving parent participation must be avoided. To produce hard, data-based conclusions about the effects of improved parent participation is the task of future research.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

1. Results on all four dependent variables favor high participation in both roles. Parents scoring high in both decision-making and learner roles:
   a. Appeared most satisfied, showed more self-confidence, had greater sense of internal locus of control, and greater assurance about their future.
   b. Had children who did best on both intellective and task-oriented measures.
   c. Were more involved in more efforts to change community institutions.
   d. Were more prevalent in programs having high quality.
2. Strength in the decision-making role appears to be more highly related to positive or desirable findings in the parents and institutional change, than strength in the learner role.
3. Parents have very positive feelings about Head Start and view it as very beneficial to self, children, and changing other institutions.

4. Highly participative parents continue or increase their participative style after children leave Head Start.
5. Centers with younger parents seem to have higher participation in both roles.
6. Centers with more repeating parents (second, third child in Head Start) appear to give preference to the decision-making role.
7. Centers with low participation in both roles fared poorest throughout the study.
8. There is a selective factor relating to parent participation. Parents with more education and some previous history of involvement were more frequently those showing participation in Head Start. The presence of such parents in the families served by Head Start seems to contribute to the level of participation and to the related effects on selves, children, programs, and community.
9. There is heterogeneity in the strength and extent of parent participation by individual parents and in centers as units. Differences can be identified and classified reliably.
10. There is a group of parents not involved in Head Start. Main reasons appear to be working parents and other young children in the home.

THE IMPACT ON HEAD START PARENTS

1. Parents who were high in participation, especially those high in decision-making, were also high in feelings of ability to control their environment. Feelings of ability to control their environment were high for all Head Start parents, suggesting that mere identification with Head Start may be an asset to parents.
2. Parents who were high in participation also viewed themselves as more successful, more skillful, and better able to influence their environment.
3. Parents rating high in participation also reported higher pre-Head Start involvement. Further, their involvement in Head Start appears to reduce other activities temporarily. Those parents participating actively in

Head Start report their level of participation in activities after their Head Start experience is as high or higher than before or during. Former parents generally increased their activities outside Head Start, suggesting greater community involvement.

4. Head Start appears to have had less or no effect on the uninvolved parent.
5. Head Start involvement appears to lead to an increase in personal self-esteem. Where involvement was lower, self-esteem was lower. Highest self-esteem was in high decision-making sites.
6. Former parents report reduced self-esteem. The data do not provide sufficient information to identify cause. One conclusion might be that the high esteem of Head Start parents has a time limited dimension. Another possibility, which is more likely, is that the whole dimension of support for parents is radically lacking in most institutions with which parents must relate after Head Start, especially public schools. This absence of support for parents may result in the reduction of one's self esteem. Certainly there is more evidence in general writings, observations, and personal reports for this conclusion.

THE IMPACT ON HEAD START CHILDREN

1. The extent of parent participation is a critical variable to the benefits derived by the children from their Head Start experience.
2. There is a strong relationship between high participation by parents and better performance on intellective and task-oriented measures. The children of parents with extensive participation in both roles produced better scores on verbal intelligence, academic achievement, self-concept, behavioral ratings in classrooms and at home, and change ratings in both learning and activities.
3. The children of parents in centers which were classified as high in one or both roles scored better on child measures than did children at centers which were classified as low or minimal in both roles.

4. The children in LoLo centers were older, and might have been expected to score better on age correlated measures, yet they did not perform as well as the younger children from centers classified as high in one or both roles.
5. The children of paid employees were very similar to children of HiHi parents (a parallel result to finding that paid employees performed much as HiHi parents).

THE IMPACT ON PROGRAM QUALITY

1. Program quality varies from component to component as well as from center to center.
2. Centers with high participation in both roles also fared best in program quality assessment.
   a. Staff at these centers reported better quality.
   b. Parent chairmen reported quality higher than chairmen at other centers.
   c. Evaluation team leaders assessments concurred with staff and chairmen.
3. Some components of program quality show comparatively low ratings in most or all centers. One concludes that some very large permeating forces are affecting such situations. Though participation may have been high, and general program quality high, some components did not necessarily receive high ratings. Overall, the quality of classroom, administration, medical/dental and recruiting were reported as positive. Social services, nutrition and career development fluctuated.
4. Centers classified as low in both roles were reported as the second strongest in program quality by local staff and chairmen. Team leaders, however, reported the same programs as poorest. Though many hypotheses have been formulated, no clear explanation has been generated. The reliability of the data are questioned, and its use for any purpose beyond consideration for further study is discouraged.

THE IMPACT ON COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

1. Both the greatest number of changes and the more significant changes were reported in centers rated high in both decision-making and learner activities.
2. The centers which reported the most significant kind of institutional changes were those where decision-making was strongest of the two roles.
3. There was a direct relationship between the extent of parent participation and the ability of parents at a center to recall and document changes. Centers with high participation provided extensive information while at LoLo centers few changes could be reported.
4. The extent to which parents from centers participated in all six stages of changes was directly related to the extent of parent participation. When the parents were high participants in both roles there was greater involvement across the six stages than where there was little involvement, or when there was high participation in only one role.
5. Significant and important institutional changes appeared to be associated with number of factors:
   a. Parents who were interested in the welfare of their families.
   b. Head Start staffs who provided opportunities for parent involvement in both roles.
   c. Staffs who provided continued support and encouragement.
   d. Community leaders who were responsive to the need of low income families.
   e. Federal and state policies and funding which provided a support base and climate conducive to bringing about change for the benefit of low income families. Failure to provide one or more of the factors appeared to curtail the extent and effectiveness of institutional change.

PARENTS IN ACTION

This section of the report deals with anecdotal descriptions of actual incidents where parents, as decision-makers or as learners, experienced changes in their personal lives in some significant way. Based on data gathered by MIDCO directly and on information collected by field research personnel in the twenty centers studied, this section illustrates parent involvement at its best.

The anecdotes relate actual comments of Head Start parents to some of the major findings of the study. The study found that parents have very positive feelings about Head Start and view it as very beneficial to self, children, and changing institutions. Another finding was that parents who were high in participation also viewed themselves as more successful, more skillful, and better able to influence their environment. The study also found that parents who were high in both decision-making and learner roles appeared most satisfied, showed more self-confidence, had greater sense of internal locus of control, and greater assurance about their future. The following incidents were selected to highlight subjective reactions of what Head Start meant to parents as related to some of the subsequent findings of the study.

These reported incidents may have taken place in situations where forces other than Head Start were in existence. It is, therefore, difficult to affirm that the changes were independent of all these forces. Nevertheless, from the personal vantage points of parents, Head Start involvement is often a vital activity in their lives.

In one incident, when discussing the meaning of parent involvement with a

Head Start parent, she said, "Once you have been involved in Head Start you are never the same again. Nine out of ten times, it is enriching and rewarding, even frustrating at times, but you're never the same again, and for the most part it is a betterment."

PARENTS AS DECISION-MAKERS

In addition to increased self-confidence and inner-direction gained by parents through participation, there were many comments made with regard to parent participation in decision-making roles. In talking with a policy council chairman, he related the following story:

Budget funds were low and it was a matter of choice between keeping a staff position filled or decreasing the number of Head Start children to be served. After considering the results of several evaluations concerning the Head Start nutritionist, the policy council made a decision to eliminate the position; thus, making it possible to retain all of the children being served. Although much controversy was generated, the policy council held to their decision and made a budget change that could accomodate the number of children enrolled. In order to influence this decision, the policy council decided that one of the committee representatives would study Head Start nutrition and menu-planning and serve as the "Nutrition Expert" for the center. The committee chairman volunteered and is currently serving in this capacity.

The following incident occurred in a Southwest community. The County Head Start Coordinator hired a project director that would be responsible for a particular center. The coordinator, however, failed to consult with the policy committee or the policy council. The result was dismissal of the project director until mutual agreement between the Head Start coordinator and the Head Start policy council was reached.

In another community, the policy committee chairman reported that due to the parents' influence and recommendations, a senior teacher in charge of the Head Start center would not be rehired. The senior teacher had displayed little interest or concern in center problems and could not deal effectively with the staff. They are currently seeking someone who will be good in the classroom, but also has administrative capabilities.

PARENTS AS LEARNERS

At another center a staff person had these comments to make,"When I first came to work with Head Start, I had two years of college with no particular interest in returning. I came to work here as a teacher. . . . I enrolled in the Head Start Supplementary Training Program. . . . I became Head Start Director. Of course, I attribute all of this to my becoming involved in the Head Start program. I have learned an awful lot about young children; how they develop and learn. I no longer believe in the traditional methods of teaching at all."

In another Head Start community a para-professional discussed her experiences with Head Start. "Head Start has been a marvelous experience for me. I am more aware of expressing myself. I feel my opinions are valuable to schools in community affairs. I'm more concerned with being informed about things and actively taking part. . . . From the people I've met, I know now where to get information and how and who to see to solve any problems. It has given me a great deal of self-confidence; a desire to be active in things; to voice my opinions; and much gratification for what I have been able to help with. I have only one sad feeling - that Head Start isn't available to everyone. I hope some day it will be."

In Massachusetts, a wife and mother remarked, "Head Start has changed my life

in many positive ways. The process has been slow but is still continuing. Back in 1965, I was hired as a teacher-aide in the Head Start program. . . . I am now enrolled in college, working toward a degree in Early Childhood Education. . . .

It is extremely difficult to put into words the innumerable changes which have taken place in my life. My goals and horizons have been broadened, my self-image has improved, self-confidence risen and most important, I have a new perspective concerning education as a whole and in participation, as it relates to my family and children. Head Start for me has done all of the things that we hope it will do for children. The development of me as a whole in the last seven years can be related most emphatically to Head Start. It is now time for me to move out and afford another parent the numerous opportunities Head Start has provided for me. 'Can do' and success are just as important for parents as they are for children. PLEASE DON'T WIPE OUT PARENT INVOLVEMENT!"

An anecdote from Iowa relates the story of a Head Start mother who moved from enrolling her child in Head Start to the position of serving as national chairman of the Ad Hoc Parents Advisory Committee to the Office of Child Development for the last two years. Her present position in the local community is parent coordinator at the Migrant Action Council. In 1967-68, she knew nothing about Head Start. Somebody said to her, "Your daughter should be enrolled in Head Start."

In 1968, her first child was enrolled in Head Start Summer program and continued in the full year program. During that time, she learned about parent involvement and CAP. "I began doing a lot of work in the Community Action Program and so went on salary as an Outreach worker. I continued working as a volunteer in the Head Start program. My job with CAP came as the result of my working in Head Start. It was about six months after I first got in Head Start that I became a part of the staff with the CAP agency." During 1968, she was selected as

an officer at the center, then she was elected as a state delegate by the PAC. At that time, the state was organizing and she was a charter member of the State PAC. She was elected as treasurer of the state group.

In 1970, she was selected as a VOLT consultant and for two years she worked as a parent involvement specialist. A request came for persons to be named to the Jules Sugarman Task Force and her name was accepted. She was then named Region VII delegate to the National Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to OCD and was elected its chairman, a position she has held for the past two years. She is presently chairman of the Iowa State Policy Group.

In discussing what all this has meant in her life, she said, "I have made some money, but it is more rewarding to me than money--it is people I have known and places I have gone and the rewarding feelings I have about the things I have done. Because of Head Start, I have done things that I would never have done without it. It has been status and recognition for me. As a result of my Head Start work, I am serving on three boards in the community, Charley Brown Day Care Center, Red Cross Service to Servicemen's Families Committee and Senior Citizens, Inc." She has also been on Project Home Start and its Evaluation Committee since September, 1971.

In one eastern community visited, a Head Start mother expressed her personal feelings with the following: "I feel Head Start is one of the nicest experiences in a child's young life. It is a place where you have other children your age with whom you learn, play and work. There are big people who smile a lot and make you feel good when they tell you how well you did something or how pretty or how handsome you look. Then there are all of the toys and books and animals and other things that we share with all of the other children. I'm looking at Head Start as I would look at it if I were a child. You see, I wish that I had experienced the Head Start program when I was a child. I needed something like this then; I needed positive experiences. Heaven knows, I had many negative ones. I needed

someone who smiled a lot, who talked softly, who laughed and played with me and who let me lay my head in her lap. I needed praise. I needed forgiveness when I did something wrong, not just ridicule. I didn't have books and dolls and toys at home. How nice it would be to have someone come to your rescue in time of need and let everyone know that you were important and you had your rights, too. To be able to learn manners, so early in life so as not to become embarassed as you stumbled onto them later on. There are children in Head Start who come from environments similar to mine and, in behalf of these children, I must let you know that you have given them and shown them that there is a better life where you can succeed, you are important, you can be what you want to be, it is not just a dream that you wonder about. So, if you have given just one little child hope and purpose, you have succeeded in changing what his whole life could be. Not just his life but the life of his offspring. <u>This is where it's at</u>! <u>It's beautiful</u>!

I started out volunteering because I liked children, especially the ones who acted like I used to act. I wanted to be a friend to someone who needed me. After one year of volunteering, I know I'd like to do this all of the time and I'd like to learn more about children and how I can help and teach them more. I studied hard on my own, took the High School Equivalency test, passed it, enrolled in the Teacher-Aide Course, and hope to get my certificate soon. I have met many beautiful children and many fine, brave, friendly teachers and parents. I have learned more in these two years academically and socially than my years in school as a student. My self-confidence, appearance, my outlook on life have all improved. So it hasn't been too late for me, after all. Head Start has helped me succeed in my adult life."

A Head Start father with a severe sight handicap attributes Head Start with helping him move out of a withdrawn shell which he felt he had been in all of his

life prior to his Head Start experience.

As a Head Start parent, he became an officer in the center committee. "The first year I didn't do much," he says reflectively. "The second year, I was much more involved. Now I go out into the community and take part, holding offices in community programs. In Head Start parent involvement I was made to feel more equal. It also helped the family. The children were excited about Head Start and then, as their parents, we became excited. At first, I was afraid, as were my children. We were a low income family. One of my children was very shy and withdrawn. After the Head Start experience my children were ready when it was time for them to enroll in kindergarten. Head Start took away their bashfulness and being afraid. It helped our whole family to feel that even though we were low income, we could still have the respect of others. The children brought pride home from Head Start. 'I know my colors,' one of them told his daddy with pride.

I had a chance to get a general accounting degree through the Manpower Development Training Act. I learned of this program because I was in Head Start. I began work on my degree in November, 1969 and finished in September, 1971. I am now teaching an accounting course in the South Side Center CAP educational program. I have hopes of getting an accounting position in the future."

He felt that he is more involved in the community as a result of his participation in Head Start. He is a member of the Advisory Board for the CAP Community Centers and his church activities have increased. "I feel like I have something to give."

THE STATUS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

There is little doubt but that both the learner and decision-making roles are important positive influences on parents, their Head Start children, the quality of programs and other community institutions. The strongest effect appears to come from a combined effort in both areas. It is the judgment of the evaluators that contrary to arguments cited in the introduction, if the decision-making role is de-emphasized the learning type of participation will also decline. There appears to be a "lifting" relationship in that high decision-making produces higher learning. This may be explained by the fact that if decision-making is high, parents are participating in developing and approving budgets, funds for parent activities are more apt to be included, and parents are more apt to plan and conduct increased learning opportunities which more accurately respond to their needs and interests. Conversely, if the learner role is de-emphasized while maintaining the decision-making effort, parents doing planning will undoubtedly find ways to maintain the learning services to other parents.

Though most Head Start parents are presumably under the poverty income guideline level, one cannot generalize about parents to any great extent. Self-esteem appears unusually high across all parents and all classifications of centers, suggesting that relationship with Head Start may contribute some positive effect to parents' self-image. Head Start parents in this study scored much better than other reports of low income adults (McCarthy, 1968)*.

Examination of Head Start parents yields a further classification of participants and non-participants. There are marked differences in the general characteristics of the two groups. Participants have more formal education, and

more pre-Head Start experiences of group involvement. Non-participants have less formal education and less early involvement. This may suggest that high parent participation in a center or agency program is related to the type of parents who have chidren in the program. If so, then it is possible that the recruitment and selection effort could be manipulated toward more able parents or toward more able parents or toward parents with less prior participation and less formal education. This relationship exists. It is not clear to what extent the selection of parents enhances or limits the possibility of achieving high parent participation. Nor is it known how strong this education and participation factor is among the other forces that seem to relate to the achievement of good participation. It would appear that this one factor is not the only significant factor affecting the extent of participation, though it is an important one.

The two roles (decision-making and learner) appear to be heavily inter-related. Involved parents are usually involved in both roles to some extent. High participation in the decision-making role appears to produce higher learner role participation. Shared responsibility (decision-making role) between staff and parents is related to better program quality. An exception in the data reveals that the staff at centers classified as low in both roles reported program quality as second only to centers classified as high in both roles. (This was not consistant with outside observers who rated them lower than the other three types of centers.) Where there is both low decision-making and low learner activity, the parents have little voice in planning and apparently staff make only limited efforts to provide learning opportunities. It is probable that when the interaction between staff and parents generated by decision-making responsibilities is absent or significantly reduced, or of a token nature, staff attempts at other kinds of participation are less relevant, lacking the impact of parent awareness and leadership. These programs appear

to function with little interaction between staff and parents. The consequence is that the staff is isolated from needed information and helpful criticism. As a result, decisions are apt to be centered on staff concerns, even conveniences, rather than parent needs and interests. As other studies in a variety of areas have shown, one effect of isolationism is that it tends to generate a myth of superiority for which there is no mechanism for critical examination, and which often does not reflect reality. It would appear that this may be occurring in those centers which were classified as low in both roles, and indeed, fared lowest in most other categories of this study.

THEORY, POLICY AND PRACTICE

There are three major theories presented regarding the causes of poverty, as discussed in some detail in the first final report for this project, entitled Perspectives on Parent Participation in Project Head Start. Each has its own model (with many tactics) for overcoming poverty. These theories are summarized in Table I.

TABLE 1

Theories of Poverty

THEORY	CAUSE	CURE	HEAD START ROLE
Personal Deprivation	Disadvantaged	Rehabilitation & Services	Learner
Social Structures	Disenfranchised	Institutional cahnge	Decision-making
Buying Power	Inadequate money	Improved buying power	Jobs (No income supplement)

Originally there was high commitment to the theory of "personal deprivation." There is extensive emphasis on education for parents in child development, parenting, self-improvement and skill development in subsequent local practices. These are the activities investigated in the present project as "learner" activities or roles.

Subsequently, there has been a gradually increased recognition of the "social structure" theory in both policy and practice. That trend provides increasing emphasis on parent involvement in decision-making within the Head Start programs in areas of personnel, program, and policy. It has now culminated in the policy councils and committees which share the decision-making authority with administering and operating institutions, thus affecting these institutions directly. Simultaneously, there have been increasing references to the role of Head Start parents in influencing other institutions related to other problem areas such as public education, housing, civil rights, law enforcement, welfare services, food assistance programs and health services.

Head Start policy and practices have not incorporated the third theoretical approach, referred to here as "buying power," to any large extent. The single exception is the emphasis on giving preferences to Head Start parents for jobs in Head Start. This does result in increasing the buying power of parents, but not along lines which make possible any widespread approach to buying power for low income families since there are few jobs available, and once parents are hired the positions may not be open again for several years. There is also some evidence to suggest that such positions have been awarded on the basis of prior excellence in learner and decision-making roles rather than as a direct effort to increase buying power of parents who may have the greatest need for money.

In order to examine parent participation as it could operate in Head Start, this study selected Head Start centers and parents for study which exemplified high

and low participation in the decision-making and learner roles. Thus, it examines the phenomenon of parent participation and does not present a picture of how the current parent participation policy is being implemented in typical Head Start programs. The telephone survey conducted at the beginning of this project suggested that there are many programs which do not appear to be implementing the new policy statement. There is no enforcement procedure that is uniformly applied to all programs. Regional offices have the major responsibility for monitoring the extent to which Head Start policies have been implemented and the regional positions and community representative subjective monitoring and attitudes toward parent participation are quite diverse. De facto, the recent OCD policy statement is more of a guideline than a policy. Thus, it is the opinion of these researchers, that while this study examined parent participation as it could be implemented in Head Start, further work on uniform monitoring and implementation strategies is necessary before the benefits of this program can be delivered to all Head Start children, parents and communities.

PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

Several program implications were identified through the procedures of this study.

1. It is clear that the extent of parent activities offered or initiated by the agency or center is directly related to the extent and frequency of individual parent participation in both roles.

   The study clearly indicates that extensive participation by parents in Head Start is associated with many beneficial results for children, parents, Head Start programs and communities. The best results were observed where parents were highly involved in both decision-making and learning roles. When the two roles were examined separately, that is when situations were compared in which participation was high in one role but low in the other, there were few differences. However, the results tended to favor the decision-making role as being the more potent of the two. We have speculated that the strength of the decision-making role can and may be carrying momentum for the learner role. Thus,the removal of the decision-making role could possibly result in lessening rather than strengthening the learner role. We do not believe that Head Start could continue to achieve--certainly not improve--its program quality, nor its contribution to parent, children and community change through parent participation without a strong decision-making role. Thus, the results of the study seem to indicate that Head Start programs should facilitate parent involvement in both learning and decision-making roles stressing, perhaps, the opportunities for parents to function as decision-makers.

2. The questionnaires and interview methods developed for this study provide methods for monitoring Head Start parent programs. From these, an inexpensive and uniform monitoring system could be developed so that those programs

which appear to have critical weaknesses could then be followed up with on-site work. This approach may be adapted to all components given the development of base line information for the respective components on which equally reliable judgments could be made.

3. Centers showing the greatest number of parents highly involved in decision-making were more apt to have a line item in their budget for parent activities and allocated more staff time to parent participation. Centers that were high in both decision-making and learner roles allocated more dollars ($8.80 per parent) for parent activities than did all other centers ($4.70 per parent). It appears that Head Start parent programs are more successful when staff efforts and budget priorities are devoted to parent activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study was limited by the fact that it is difficult to interpret the positive findings in any of the four dependent variable areas as being the direct result of parent participation in either of the three types studied. Rather, interpretation of the positive results as associations with parent involvement is all that the logical design of the study will allow. Certainly, if no association had been found, then the effectiveness of parent participation would be in question. This is not the case, however. Rather, the present project provides considerable support for the positive aspects of parent participation.

A logical next step might be to attempt to establish whether or not there is in fact a causal relationship between parent participation and effects on the parents, the children, program quality, and community institutions. It is, unfortunately, difficult to establish such causal relationships when studying variables *in vivo*. Nonetheless, considering the current project as an exploratory study, a number of areas would lend themselves to fruitful investigation in the area of parent participation, based on the present results and conclusions.

An important study to carry out in the near future is an assessment of the effects of parent participation on parents and children using a pretest - postest design. This would allow for the assessment of change over the Head Start experience, and would also allow for statistical or experimental control of initial levels on the specific dimensions to be measured. In addition to this, followup of the parents and the children for one, two, three or more years would be possible to trace the longer term effects of parent participation.

Another approach, which might be feasible in the study of program quality, as well as an approach to the study of site classification effects on parents and children, is the experimental manipulation of parent involvement in Head Start

through differing parent involvement guidelines. As hypothesized in the section on program quality results, perhaps where there is low parent involvement, staff assumes greater responsibility for creating a high quality program. This could be studied by guideline manipulation.

Not a great deal is known about the characteristics of parent involvement staff, and the characteristics which lead to high parent participation. A study of staff effectiveness might yield important information.

The results of this project point to a more thorough study of those parents who do become involved, and a comparison of this group with non-involved parents. There is a question as to whether Head Start simply provides a convenient vehicle for some parents who would become involved in something else if it were not Head Start, and perhaps accomplish the same thing for herself and her child personally, or whether Head Start fills a need that would go unfilled otherwise? What are the psychological characteristics of highly involved parents, and in what ways do they differ from low involvement parents? Is it possible to involve parents in higher levels of participation who would not normally participate, and would this participation carry over into higher levels of community involvement? It might be possible to do. Certainly, it would be worthwhile to explore ways to increase participation.

There is growing anecdotal evidence to suggest that parent participation may have far reaching effects on various facets of the Head Start mother's life beyond herself and her Head Start child. Stories abound, regarding marital problems arising as the Head Start mother begins to become involved and "outgrows" her husband. A study of such effects would be of considerable interest. What effects does this growth have on the older and younger children in the family?

Because of the covariation of decision-maker and learner activities, at the individual parent level, the differential effects of different roles is still

not entirely clear. A more thorough investigation of different types of parent involvement, including the role of parent as teacher of his children would be extremely worthwhile.

Finally, one of the important objectives of programs for the poor is to help them to overcome their poverty. Does parent participation help parents to overcome poverty? A followup or longitudinal study could be carried out to determine whether a decrease in poverty level follows from parent involvement.

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